PRINCIPLES
OF
EFFECT AND COLOUR
BY
G. F. PHILLIPS

COURTOWN.

this third edition has the
additional uncoloured vignette
on the title page.
& many additions to the text.

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1496

PLATE 8.

London, Published by Darton & Clark, Holborn Hill.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECT & COLOUR.

BY

G. F. PHILLIPS.

Member of the New Society of Painters in Water Colours.

STORMY WEATHER AT SEA.

Third Edition.

LONDON,

BY DARTON & CLARK, 58, HOLBORN HILL.

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PRINCIPLES

OF

EFFECT AND COLOUR,

AS APPLICABLE TO

LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

ILLUSTRATED BY

EXAMPLES FOR THE AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT IN ART.

BY G. F. PHILLIPS,
MEMBER OF THE NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

"It is by attention to principles that lessons become instructive."—Dr. Price.

THE THIRD EDITION,

CONSIDERABLY ENLARGED,

WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TINTS MADE USE OF IN EACH SUBJECT.

LONDON:
DARTON AND CLARK, HOLBORN HILL.
1839.

PREFACE.

In presenting to the public a *Third Edition* of the "Principles of Effect and Colour, as applicable to Landscape Painting," a considerable degree of satisfaction arises in the mind from the very favorable reception of the two former editions, by the public at large, and the very flattering Critical Notices which have appeared in the "*Athenæum*," the "*Literary Gazette*," the "*Observer*," and other publications.—Anxious that the work should maintain not only its former character, but that it should have a still higher claim to public patronage, several additions and improvements have been made to render it of more general interest to the amateur and the professional student. The letter-press descriptions of the subjects illustrative of the work have been more fully explained, and the tints applicable to the various effects appended to

their respective illustrations. A new subject has likewise been added as a vignette, illustrative of the effect of stormy weather at sea, with a view to show that colour conduces essentially to sentiment.

It may be here observed, that novelty is not the characteristic of the present work, the object of which is rather to simplify those principles which have been acted on by the best Masters to ensure a certain result, without a knowledge of which a life may be spent in the pursuit of Art with comparatively little advantage. Those principles once obtained, a foundation is laid which renders our future studies less difficult, and the results more certain.

PRINCIPLES

OF

EFFECT AND COLOUR, &c.

ON EFFECT.

It is judiciously observed, by Dr. Price, that "it is by an attention to *principles* that lessons become instructive;" and it is only by a skilful application of such principles that the student is rendered capable of working with certainty to a successful result, whether the subject be simple or complex, whether the effect be characterized by a calm serenity, or that of elemental strife; whether he may have to pourtray the scenery of the cottage, or the more elevated combinations of the grand and the sublime. It is, therefore, to broad and general principles that the mind of the student should be directed.

Effect may be defined to be a skilful management of the light and shade of any arrangement of objects, with a view to strengthening the character of the subject, and rendering it grateful to the feelings of the spectator. And it may be here observed, that, however favorable may be the forms or combinations, their pictorial character will depend materially on the judicious arrangement of the light and shade throughout the subject, and the proportion of light, dark, and middle tint.

It has been attempted to be shewn by Sir Joshua Reynolds, that an almost invariable proportion of light, dark, and middle tint, is observable in the works of the best masters; that one fourth is light, one fourth dark, and the remaining two fourths composed of middle tint: but, as it may be fair to suppose that Sir Joshua's observations were given rather to the works of history and portraiture than to landscape, such an arrangement as to the proportions of light, dark, and middle tint, will apply but in a partial degree to landscape subjects. With subjects painted on a light key, such as many of those of Cuyp and Vandeveldt, the great proportion of one half middle tint would destroy the open daylight effect so essential to that class of subjects.

The leading qualities of a picture, as regards effect, are *Breadth, Opposition,* and *Harmony;* and whether the subject be painted on a light or dark key, those qualities must be preserved, to render it interesting to the spectator.

By Breadth is meant those broad masses of light and shade into which a picture is divided, without any reference to the light and shade of the individual objects found in or composing such masses.

By Opposition is to be understood the bringing dark objects in contact with light masses, and light objects in contact with dark masses.

Harmony is a uniting of the extremes of light and dark, by the introduction of such intermediate tints as will subdue that crudeness of effect which would be the result of opposing light to dark, and dark to light, invariably throughout the picture.

It must be admitted that, to preserve those leading qualities and to combine a finished effect, is the result of some study and practice; but those qualities will, in all cases, render a sketch of more interest than the most elaborate production of art, where such qualities have not been preserved. To illustrate the above observations by examples is

the object of the present work, and to show that the best productions of art have been perfected on those broad principles applicable alike to all subjects.

It has been already stated that the leading qualities of a picture, as regards effect, are *Breadth, Opposition,* and *Harmony.* To obtain Breadth, light objects are brought together, as light buildings, sails of vessels, light clouds, &c.; and dark objects are brought together, as dark buildings, clumps of dark foliage, &c. For the purposes of Opposition, light objects are brought against dark masses, as the light sails of vessels against a dark sky, or against dark masses of foliage, figures dressed partly in white, or light-coloured animals, as a light cow, sheep, &c. against the dark masses of the background; dark objects are brought against the light masses of the background in the same manner and for the same purpose; as the dark masts, sails, and rigging of vessels against the light of the sky, and against light buildings, &c. and figures in dark dresses against the light of the background.

It becomes here necessary to observe that, in opposing light objects to dark masses, they should be small compared with the masses they are opposed to: the same observation applies

to dark objects when opposed to light masses; for, upon reflection, it must be evident, that if the objects opposed to the masses be large, such masses will be so much divided and reduced as to destroy that breadth of effect so essential to be preserved.

To produce Harmony, the crude masses of light are broken down, or subdued, by the introduction of half-light, that is, by thin washes thrown over such parts as will partially unite them to the stronger colour with which they come in contact; by the introduction of middle tint to unite the dark masses with the lighter, and sometimes by light objects, to balance the light in other parts of the picture.

In reference to the relative proportions of light, dark, and middle tint, it may be observed, that the class of subject and the intended mode of treatment, must decide the artist in the predominance of either; and his own reflections on the operations of nature will leave him in little doubt, when he considers that the more extensive the spread of light, the more cheerfulness or splendor: the more extensive the spread of dark and middle tint, the more gloom and sentiment: take, for instance, the spread of dark and middle tint, in the effect of a stormy sky, broken by partial gleams of light; or the still more extensive spread of middle tint

and dark of a deep twilight, relieved by the last gleams of the departing sun, and contrast them with the spread of light imparted by the noon-tide rays, with every object sparkling under the influence of a bright and luminous atmosphere, and the effect on the mind, of light, dark, and middle tint, according to their relative proportions, will be easily appreciated. It becomes necessary, therefore, in the treatment of a subject, previously to determine its character; if an open daylight effect, to have less dark and middle tint; if an effect of gloom or sentiment, less light, or tints approximating to light.

In arranging the lights of a picture, it is desirable that they seem to arise out of the subject, and that they agree with the local colour and character of the objects; as light clouds, banks of light, warm-coloured or grey sand, stubble-fields, or roads of a light-grey; which mode serves to give an air of truth to the whole, concealing at the same time the art made use of in the treatment; for that treatment will give the greater pleasure where the means to produce it are the least seen. The darks of a picture demand the same consideration, adopting such objects as, from their local colour and character, convey an idea of depth of shade.

It must be admitted, that in local views, that is, where localities must be preserved, it will not unfrequently happen that the situation or disposition of the objects will be unfavorable to such modes of arrangement; in such cases, the usual means of art must be resorted to: and this is the especial business of an artist; for that could scarcely be called art which requires no study, no contrivance, no exercise of mental ingenuity, to accomplish; and it is legitimately his province to call in such aids as will the more readily enable him to execute his purpose, which is that of completing his picture, without sacrificing those qualities essential to pictorial excellence. Where the forms in nature are unpictorial, or the objects so much separated from each other that an idea of mass is not to be obtained, a low-toned background, if the objects are dark, will serve to unite them and throw them into mass; or a light background, if the objects are of a light character, by which, in either case, the forms, or the arrangement of forms, if crude, will be so far concealed as not to obtrude themselves, and the eye of the spectator will the more readily rest on other forms or other combinations. In considering the term background, it must be understood that everything in a picture becomes a background to that which is before it.

To enumerate the various instances in which the forms and arrangements of objects in nature may prove unfavorable, would lead to little in the way of improvement; suffice it to observe, that the best masters have obviated those difficulties by a constant attention to the leading qualities already noticed, and which, by a constant study of nature, they have rendered themselves capable of retaining, under the ever-varying circumstances which have presented themselves; thus, resorting at all times to those broad and unerring principles found to be universally applicable.

There is a sentiment, and sometimes a grandeur, to be found in a simple arrangement of objects and a simple treatment, arising out of the few transitions existing in the subject, which will be seldom found in those of an intricate character; it has therefore been considered preferable to give examples in those combinations of objects, rather than in such as would necessarily be more perplexing, and less advantageous for illustration.

DIAGRAMS.

Fig. 1.

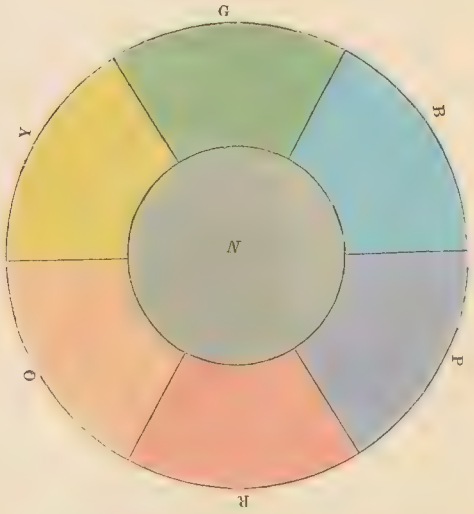
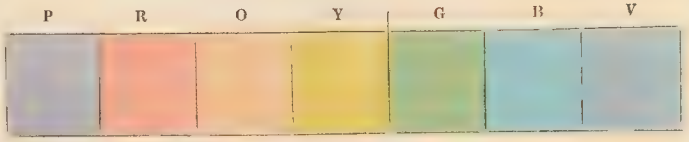


Fig. 2.



EXPLANATION OF THE DIAGRAMS.

In Fig. 1 are given the Primitive Colours, Red, Yellow, and Blue, with their opposing derivatives, Green, Purple, and Orange; and, by carrying the eye across the diagram, the colours forming an harmonious opposition will be immediately seen,—the Green being opposed to the Red, the Purple to the Yellow, and the Orange to the Blue. These derivatives, being compounds, and neither of them partaking of the primitive colour to which it is opposed, become a contrast, while their subdued character, being broken colours, renders that contrast harmonious, as, by placing them in contact with each other, it will be found that the Green gives brilliancy to the Red, the Purple to the Yellow, and the Orange to the Blue, while the neutral in the centre harmonizes with the whole.

Fig. 2 shews the Prismatic Colours, and their order of arrangement; and, being divided, we have their classification of warm and cold; the warm comprising the Purple, the Red the Orange, and the Yellow; the cold those of the Green, the Blue, and the Violet. The Greys,

in a warm arrangement of colour, will invariably partake of the Purple, while those in a cold arrangement will partake more of the Violet, shewing that the extremes of either arrangement become harmonizing neutrals in their own peculiar classification of colour. It should be noticed, that these observations apply generally to all compound tints, however far removed from the Primitives, or first mixtures, the qualities of colour being shewn by their harmonious opposition.

By a further mixture, that is, by compounding the derivatives, we obtain the tertiaries: the Green and Orange in combination producing the Olive; the Purple and Orange producing the Russet; and the Green and Purple producing the Citrine. A further mixture, without great caution, would produce blackness, as their degrees of neutrality would be scarcely observable.

ON COLOUR.

It has been considered, by some persons of experience in the arts, that it requires a peculiar taste, feeling, or genius, to become a good colourist; whether this opinion be well or ill founded, it is scarcely necessary to enquire, as little or no advantage could be derived to the student in art by a solution of the question; he should rather pursue his studies, unshackled by prejudices, convinced that the same sources of information are open to him that furnished supplies for the mind of a Rubens or a Titian.

Close observation, and the making frequent studies of nature, brings us acquainted with the local colour of objects; and a look of nature and of truth will pervade such studies, more powerful, though perhaps not more grateful to our feelings, than arrangements on the principles of harmony; but, as it is the object of art to gratify the spectator, it becomes evident, that something more than the mere common look of nature is necessary to call forth

our admiration: a knowledge of nature in her happiest moments, when the combinations of colour are in the most perfect harmony; or when, by a powerful opposition, the same acquires a greater interest and increased splendor, from the broad masses of warm and cool colour.

It becomes, then, the business of the artist to take a more extensive view of nature; to study her under various circumstances, to notice the various combinations, to observe the proportion of warm and cool colour under the various effects; how, by gradating into each other, an harmonious character is maintained, or, by the powerful opposition of a small but positive bit of colour, in one part of the scene, the whole arrangement becomes balanced. By thus pursuing his studies, he will be able to discover what is consistent with the simplicity of nature, what produces splendor, and what contributes to the grand and the sublime. Without such attention, the simple but interesting scenery of the cottage would be destroyed by the powerful opposition of colour characteristic of a higher class of subject, and the grandeur of a subject of the higher class diminished by the want of that opposition necessary to give due force, splendor, and interest.

As the principles of *Breadth*, *Opposition*, and *Harmony*, apply equally to colour as to

light and shade, the same means are resorted to for preserving breadth of colour which have been mentioned respecting light and dark masses: for example, objects of a warm colour are brought together to give breadth, while those of a cooler character are brought into mass for the same purpose; thus laying out the picture into warm and cool masses, the proportions of either depending on the character of the subject.

Opposition of colour is also analogous; as objects of a warm colour are opposed to cool masses, while those of a cool colour are opposed to warm masses; and Harmony is the result of the introduction of such broken tones of colour as bear a partial affinity to the warm and cold; as purples, greens, browns, and greys; the greens harmonizing with the red, the purples with the yellow, the browns with the blue, and the greys with either and all of the primitive colours.

In considering opposition of colour, a point of no small importance to be noticed, is that which contributes force to the foreground, and, consequently, an aerial quality to the distance: if the general tone of the light be *yellow, blues* and *purples* in the foreground will give the greater force; if the light be *cool, reds* and *yellows* in the foreground will give

atmosphere to the middle ground and distance, as neither of those colours, in a positive state, will be found in those situations.

Some subjects possess a milder harmony than others, or rather, admit of less opposition, as the effects of morning and evening, where the force arises more from opposing dark to light, but where the cool and warm colours are brought into harmony by a tender gradation.

Where peculiar force or point is required in the foreground, red and blue may be brought in contact, as in the dress of a figure, on flags, or in the plumage of birds.

As a distribution of the lights and darks of a picture are necessary to maintain a balance, so is a distribution of warm and cold colour, which should be varied in strength and magnitude, according to their situations and the object proposed to be obtained. This distribution of colour will be required more particularly in those subjects possessing a strong opposition; where the tones of colour are more neutral we sometimes find the effect demands a broader treatment, and the masses of cool colour to remain undisturbed, which gives, or rather assists, its character of simplicity.

As the term Finish is variously understood, it may be of advantage to the amateur or

student in early practice to explain, that, to finish a picture, is to regulate and complete the various parts in conformity to the whole; to subdue tones that are too powerful, to strengthen those requiring more force, to give texture to objects possessing a rough or uneven surface, and flatness to others; preserving, at the same time, the breadth and general appearance of nature, with as much form and detail as is observable in the various objects, according to their distances, and the degrees of light by which the parts are rendered evident; form or detail beyond the accomplishment of such purposes tend to undo and to produce an unfinished appearance: and the more this is effected without an apparent handling or manner, the greater will be the truth and effect of nature.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

Plate I.

MILL.

As this subject is particularly illustrative of breadth, it is divided into nearly half light and half dark. The sky being the better suited for an extensive spread of light without weakening the effect, a considerable portion has been kept almost undisturbed by form, reserving all the force of the darks for the objects rising against it. The small lights scattered over the fore and middle grounds serve to connect those grounds with the sky, maintaining an agreement or harmony without destroying the breadth; had they been large, the subject would have been rendered more spotty, and the effect less powerful.

By carrying the light more freely into the foreground, more splendor would have been the necessary result, but the effect arising from breadth would have been reduced, and the simplicity of the subject sacrificed.

Plate II.

LANE SCENE. EVENING.

In this subject, though the source of light is near the horizon, the sky, being full of light, imparts it freely to objects opposed to it; thus the light of the upper part of the sky on the left is reflected on the ground to the right of the subject, and which becomes more palpable from the slope bringing it more into opposition.

The greater portion of dark undisturbed or unbroken lies near the centre of the subject, which by contrast shews the light playing around the nearer objects. The lights observable on the old paling forming the enclosure, give relief to the mass without destroying it or interfering with the broad mass of light on the ground. The horizontal direction of the clouds contrasts powerfully with the clumps of foliage rising against the sky, and assists to strengthen their character.

Plate III.

CANAL.

As this subject is intended as an illustration of the effect of clear and open daylight, the cool neutral quality of the light leaves the local colour of the landscape objects undisturbed; and the tender character of the sky allows the eye of the spectator to rest solely on the landscape; the tones of colour in such instances retain their simple local character,—freshness. The deep tone of the boat throws the dark of the water into light, while the cows coming against the light of the water, give point or force by the opposition.

A delicate tint of burnt sienna passed over the paper previous to laying in the forms of the sky and water will assist to neutralize the Grey tones, which are made of Indigo and Indian Red. The Greens are composed of Indian Yellow, Indigo, and burnt Sienna; the more burnt Sienna, the warmer will be the tone of colour; the more Indian Yellow and Indigo, the cooler and fresher.

Plate IV.

COAST SCENE.

This subject depending materially on the figures, the principal light is thrown on the beach; the tone of the sky being cool, the thinly tinting of the foreground (though with warm colours) preserves a freshness and open daylight effect, to which the darks of the figures and the boats materially contribute. The figure in a reddish-brown jacket materially assists to give atmosphere to the middle-ground and distance.

A delicate tint of light Red over the sky will contribute to harmonize the grey tones of the clouds, which are made of Indigo and Indian Red. The warm tints of the foreground are Roman Ochre and Vandyke brown. The Greens are Indigo and Indian Yellow; the browns of the dresses are Burnt Umber and Madder Brown. Nothing brighter than Indigo is necessary in the water of this subject, the greater part of which is broken down or subdued with Madder Brown.

Plate V.

MORNING.

The neutral tones of the sky and water, in this subject, contribute to the freshness of the greens and browns of the landscape, while the subdued and quiet character of the sky gives the sparkling lights increased value: the white shirt of the figure in the boat brings the light round to the foreground of the picture, while the dark of the boat gives light to the water.

The grey tint of the sky is Indigo and Indian Red gradated from the light side to the dark; a thin wash of light Red passed over the whole will subdue the purply tone of the Grey; the water, Indigo and Indian Red, warmed in the deeper parts near the lock with Burnt Umber. The greens are Indian Yellow, Indigo, and Burnt Sienna; the light broken grounds and paths are Burnt Sienna and Burnt Umber, broken with the Grey in the subdued parts; the boat, Burnt Umber and Black, except the lighter part, which is Burnt Umber.

Plate VI.

RIVER SCENE. NOON.

A strong cool light passing through a clear atmosphere, and likewise being at a considerable elevation, imparts its cool quality to all objects under its influence; the tops of buildings, foliage, roads, &c. all assuming a lighter appearance, while the darks become clear and positive. This cool quality is retained by the lights being left spare of colour; as white is cold, warm colours sparingly used will have a cool effect, the white of the paper shining through them; if, on the contrary, cold colours were substituted, they would be too cold for the general effect of nature under those circumstances.

The grey in the sky in this subject is Cobalt subdued with Blue Black; the extreme distance the same, the stronger parts Indigo and Indian Red. The greens in the middle ground, are Roman Ochre and Indigo, partially broken with the Grey; the mill, Madder Brown and Indigo, heightened in parts with Burnt Umber; the wall and building Burnt Umber and Roman Ochre, partially broken with the Grey; the road a thin wash of Vandyke Brown; the water the same as the sky.

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Plate VII.

OLD FORTRESS AND DYKE. TWILIGHT.

In this subject, the situations of the warm and cold colours are reversed, the distant and middleground objects being warm, and those of the foreground cool; the buildings, being of grey materials, afford this arrangement of colour without any violation of propriety, and give an air of truth to the whole; the cool character of the grey stone-work harmonizes with the cool tones of the water in the foreground, and unites the cool colour in a mass.

The cool tints of the sky and water, are Cobalt and Madder Brown; the warm tints, Yellow Ochre gradated with Madder Brown downwards, then with a very small portion of Cobalt to the horizon; the warm parts of the building, Madder Brown heightened with Burnt Umber and Burnt Sienna, and partially broken with the Grey; the cool parts of the building, Indigo and Indian Red, broken occasionally with Burnt Sienna and Burnt Umber.

Plate VIII. COAST SCENE. SUNLIGHT.

The splendid and luminous character of light demands an extensive spread of its influence, and requires to be conveyed to every part of the subject; for, though light, by being confined, acquires force and brilliancy, it is by such means deprived of much of its splendor, and the light being limited to a small portion of the picture, the dark becomes black and heavy, which is rather the effect of night than that of daylight. As a considerable degree of depth in the foreground mass was necessary to give light and atmosphere to the sky and distance, so the darker objects tend to throw that mass into light, while the deeper parts of those objects light up the objects themselves, thus throwing them generally into middle tint and half-light. To prevent heaviness, the warm and cool colours are opposed to each other throughout the subject, as such opposition produces that relief which must otherwise have been obtained by an increase of depth.

The cool parts of the sky and water, Cobalt and Madder Brown, the warmer parts Yellow Ochre; the lower part of the sky, a thin wash of Cobalt and Madder Brown; the water in its cool and warm parts, the same as the sky; the ground, Burnt Umber and Roman Ochre cooled in its various parts with the Grey of Indigo and Indian Red.

Plate IX.

STORMY WEATHER AT SEA.

VIGNETTE.

Motion is one of the leading characteristics of stormy effects, to which every thing in the subject should seem to contribute, and by which alone a unity throughout can be maintained; to promote this, it should be observed that the action of the water, the action of the sky, and the inclination of the vessel tend in the same direction; even the gulls, by the line of their flight become auxiliaries to the general effect.

As colour contributes much to sentiment, it should be noticed that in the present subject the greater proportion of the tones of colour are neutral. The tones of the sky are neutralized Browns and Purples, those of the water are neutralized Greens; the former composed of Indigo and Indian Red, broken down at the Upper part by Burnt Umber, and the cooler tints of the

clouds assisted by thin washes of Cobalt Blue, the warm tone of the light at the lower part of the sky is a delicate wash of Burnt Sienna; the sea in the darker parts is composed of Indigo and Indian Red, broken by Burnt Umber, to destroy the otherwise too purply effect of the colour in those parts; the neutralized Greens of the water in the foreground are composed of Indigo, Indian Red, and a portion of Burnt Sienna; the floating timber Burnt Sienna, which, being pure, tends to neutralize, by contrast, the other tints in the subject.

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